

Instructor: Gül Günaydın

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Office Hours: email to make an appointment
(please see section on Office Hours below)

Course Overview

The course is organized as an advanced seminar on social cognition—the study of how we make sense and interact with our social world. Structure and requirements of the course are the same for both undergraduate and graduate students. Every week, you will read research articles from top journals in the field and write thought papers critiquing these articles. You will also take turns in discussing and critiquing the articles during our synchronous sessions. Finally, you'll work toward developing your own original research study throughout the semester, and present and write it up as a research proposal towards the end of the semester.

The seminar will cover cutting-edge research on social cognition spanning diverse topics—including impression formation, minimal social connections, close relationships, decision making, perspective taking, and culture. Through class discussions and weekly thought papers, you will be encouraged to think critically about social cognition research, actively participate in class discussions, identify strengths and weaknesses of research studies, and develop original research ideas.

Course website:

The syllabus, readings, and assignment guidelines will be posted on the course website on SUCourse. You will also submit all assignments via the course website.

Readings:

Each week, we will read three articles from top journals in the field. Although we will read a few theoretical articles, most readings will focus on empirical articles featuring experimental research. Therefore, to thoroughly understand the readings, it is critical to have a strong background in research methods in general and experimental research in particular.

It is essential to do the readings before attending each class meeting to be able to write high quality thought papers and to participate in in-class discussions. You may download all articles from the course website.

Course requirements:

In-class discussions are the most vital component of the seminar through which the most important learning will occur. To achieve this objective, it is necessary for you to attend each class meeting well prepared to summarize and discuss the assigned readings for that week.

1) Attendance and Participation: Synchronous class sessions will be held via Zoom (please see the course website for the link). Attendance at every class session is required (also note that your camera should be on the entire session). To get participation points, you should come to each session prepared and make original, thoughtful, and meaningful contributions to class discussions. You are expected to read all assigned material prior to the class for which it is assigned. The course is

entirely discussion-based, and thus the quality of the course depends strongly on your thoughts about the assigned material and your participation.

In addition, you will take turns in summarizing the main points in each article. Please be ready to describe the study rationale, methods, and results in each paper.

2) Thought Papers: To ensure adequate preparation before class, each week you will write a thought paper (Word document, double-spaced, 300 words minimum-400 words maximum) and submit it via the Turn-it-in assignment on SUCourse prior to each class meeting by Sunday at 2PM. The thought paper should discuss your own original ideas about the following:

- critiques of study rationale (e.g., whether research questions or hypotheses make sense based on extant research discussed in the article or elsewhere)
- limitations of methods and analyses (e.g., whether the methods/measures/ analyses are appropriate to test the research hypotheses)
- alternative interpretations of findings (e.g., confounds, demand effects)
- directions for future research (e.g., study designs building on the current findings or designs combining the current findings with other research)

Please note that the above points apply to empirical articles. Occasionally, we'll read theoretical articles. In that case, your critique of the article should be a conceptual one focusing on issues such as whether or not the theoretical model is compatible with extant theories/research, things the model fails to capture, or possible extensions of the model.

In your thought paper, you don't have to touch upon each and every of the above points. In fact, I strongly encourage you to pick a few important points and discuss them in depth. For each point that you discuss in your paper, you need to make a very clear, concise, and strong argument. (For example, if you are claiming that an additional control group is necessary you need to very clearly and convincingly describe why.) A few other things to keep in mind..

- 1) The bulk of your thought paper should be the critique/future directions. So please avoid introductory sentences and keep discussion of research findings at a bare minimum (avoid altogether if at all possible). When you critique a certain aspect of a paper, you might have to provide a very brief description of findings related with that very aspect and that is perfectly fine. But try to keep those descriptions as concise as possible.
- 2) Three articles are assigned for each week. Make sure you discuss each article in your thought paper.
 - The articles might often include multiple studies, but you don't have to provide a critique of all studies within a given article. Pick one study from each article and argue your point in depth. In the case of theoretical articles, you may focus on a certain aspect of the theory.
- 3) In your thought paper, please do not discuss how individual differences (e.g., age, gender, personality, culture, SES) might moderate the findings. But do make a note of such factors to discuss during our Zoom meeting.
- 4) Sometimes the article itself identifies some limitations of the research. Please do not merely repeat issues already mentioned in the article.
- 5) In multi-study articles, studies often build on one another. For example, Study 2 in the article may address a limitation that Study 1 has. Do not discuss limitations that are already resolved within the article (unless you have a good reason to argue that the resolution was not satisfactory).

- Don't forget, your critiques should reflect your own original thinking.
- 6) Please submit as a Word document (doc or docx format).

Before we discuss each article during our Zoom meeting, I'll ask you to take turns in very briefly describing the article's rationale and each study's methods/results. So please be prepared for that.

Your thought papers will be evaluated based on whether they demonstrate understanding of the readings and critical thinking, whether they are clearly, concisely, and convincingly written, and whether they reflect your own original ideas.

Late submission policy: You will lose 1 point for submitting past 2PM on Sunday, 2 points for submitting on Monday by midnight, 4 points for submitting on Tuesday (until the class meets), and the full 5 points for submitting after the class meeting.

3) Research Proposal & Presentation: The major project for this course is a research proposal, on which you will give a conference-style presentation during one of the last course meetings. The purpose of the research proposal is for you to consider how the research covered in class interface with the topics of interest to you. In other words, the goal of the proposal is for you to consider how approaches used in social cognition research could be integrated into your current or future research program. It will involve proposing a research project that you could conduct or use as part of a future grant proposal, and will consist of the following sections: Title Page, Abstract, Keywords, Introduction, Methods, Data Analytic Strategy, and References.

The proposal should be 2500 words minimum and 3000 words maximum (Times New Roman, 12-font, double-spaced, default 1-inch margins) excluding title and references. It should be written in APA style (please visit <https://apastyle.apa.org/instructional-aids/tutorials-webinars> for guidelines).

Later in the semester, you will submit an outline of your proposal and have individual meetings with me to get feedback on your ideas.

Late submission policy: You will lose 10 points for each day you fail to submit the proposal after the due date.

Research Participation (*for Undergraduates Only*). Students can optionally serve as participants in research that is run by Sabancı University researchers. By participating in research (*including online surveys*), you can get extra points. For this course, undergraduate students will be able to earn up to 1 extra point. Two research points (1 research point equals ~30 minutes of research participation) will be converted to 1 bonus point added to your overall total at the end of the semester. More information on the available research projects will be provided during the semester. You will be able to sign up for studies and get your research participation points through the online Sona system at <http://sabanciuniv.sona-systems.com> Please carefully read the Guide for Students: Sabancı University Experiment Credits System (Sona).

Course Assessment

Thought papers: 40% (5% each x 8)

Participation: 16% (2% per discussion)

Proposal outline and meeting: 4%

In-class presentation of the proposal: 10%

Research proposal (take-home exam): 30%

Grades

The following grading scheme is used to assign the final grade for the course. Please note that the grading scheme is relatively more challenging given this is an upper-level course. No changes can be made to your final grade unless there has been an arithmetical error.

If you miss more than 2 weekly sessions without a valid excuse, you'll automatically receive an N/A grade and fail the course.

A	93-100	B	79.99-75	C	64.99-60	D	49.99-45
A-	92.99-85	B-	74.99-70	C-	59.99-55	F	44.99-0
B+	84.99-80	C+	69.99-65	D+	54.99-50		

Office Hours

If you have questions, you may email me a few days in advance to make an appointment. In your email, please list all hours you are available within the upcoming seven days so that I can find a time that fits my schedule and email you back with an appointment time. You may use the Zoom link posted on SUCourse to reach me during the appointment time (labeled Office Hour Zoom Link). Note that I may not be able to accommodate appointment requests that are made at the last minute.

Academic Honesty

Every student in this course is expected to abide by the Sabancı University Academic Integrity Statement. Please see <https://www.sabanciuniv.edu/en/academic-integrity-statement>

Academic dishonesty, or plagiarism, is the act of taking someone else's work or ideas and presenting them as your own. Academic dishonesty can be deliberate or it can also result from carelessness; you will be held responsible for academic dishonesty regardless of whether you meant to do it.

Plagiarism can include anything from copying another student's work to using journal articles or an internet source (e.g., Wikipedia) in an assignment without describing them in your own words and referencing them. Please note that making small changes in a sentence (e.g., changing "a great deal" to "a lot" and "revealed" to "showed") does not mean that you paraphrased an existing idea and it is now your original claim. If you are unsure as to whether a certain act would fall in the category of academic dishonesty, please contact me for clarification. Any form of academic dishonesty in this course (e.g. plagiarism, cheating, etc.) will not be tolerated.

*I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus throughout the semester.

Course Outline (tentative)

Week 1 (February 22nd-26th)

Course Overview and Introduction

No readings, please carefully review Course Syllabus.

Week 2 (March 1st-5th)

Impression Formation

Reis, H. T., Regan, A., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2021). Interpersonal chemistry: What is it, how does it emerge, and how does it operate? *Perspectives on Psychological Science*.

Gunaydin, G., Selcuk, E., & Zayas, V. (2017). Impressions based on a portrait predict, one-month later, impressions following a live interaction. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 8, 36-44.

Chua, K. W., & Freeman, J. B. (2020). Facial stereotype bias is mitigated by training. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*.

Week 3 (March 8th-12th)

Close Social Connections

Hirsch, J. L., & Clark, M. S. (2019). Multiple paths to belonging that we should study together.

Perspectives on Psychological Science, 14, 238-255.

Joel, S., Teper, R., & MacDonald, G. (2014). People overestimate their willingness to reject potential romantic partners by overlooking their concern for other people. *Psychological Science*, 25, 2233-2240.

Tasfiliz, D., Selcuk, E., Gunaydin, G., Slatcher, R. B., Corriero, E. F., & Ong, A. D. (2018). Patterns of perceived partner responsiveness and well-being in Japan and the United States. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 32, 355-365.

Week 4 (March 15th-19th)

Minimal Social Connections

Epley, N., & Schroeder, J. (2014). Mistakenly seeking solitude. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 143, 1980-1999.

Sandstrom, G.M., & Dunn, E.W. (2014). Is efficiency overrated?: Minimal social interactions lead to belonging and positive affect. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 5, 436-441.

Boothby, E. J., Cooney, G., Sandstrom, G. M., & Clark, M. S. (2018). The liking gap in conversations: do people like us more than we think? *Psychological Science*, 29, 1742-1756.

Week 5 (March 22nd-26th)

Perspective Taking

Ruttan, R. L., McDonnell, M. H., & Nordgren, L. F. (2015). Having “been there” doesn’t mean I care: When prior experience reduces compassion for emotional distress. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 108, 610-622.

Campbell, T., O’Brien, E., Van Boven, L., Schwarz, N., & Ubel, P. (2014). Too much experience: A desensitization bias in emotional perspective taking. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 106, 272-285.

Zhou, H., Majka, E. A., & Epley, N. (2017). Inferring perspective versus getting perspective: Underestimating the value of being in another person’s shoes. *Psychological Science*, 28, 482-493.

Week 6 (March 29th-April 2nd)

Judgment and Decision Making (JDM)

Davidai, S., Gilovich, T. & Ross, L. (2012). The meaning of default options for potential organ donors. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*, 109, 15201-15205.

Cooney, G., Gilbert, D. T., & Wilson, T. D. (2014). The unforeseen costs of extraordinary experience. *Psychological Science*, 25, 2259-2265.

Stagnaro, M. N., Dunham, Y., & Rand, D. G. (2018). Profit versus prejudice: harnessing self-interest to reduce in-group bias. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 9, 50-58.

Week 7 (April 5th-9th)

Narrative analysis

Orvell, A., Kross, E., & Gelman, S. A. (2020). “You” speaks to me: Effects of generic-you in creating resonance between people and ideas. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 117, 31038-31045.

- Charlesworth, T. E., Yang, V., Mann, T. C., Kurdi, B., & Banaji, M. R. (2020). Gender stereotypes in natural language: Word embeddings show robust consistency across child and adult language corpora of more than 65 million words. *Psychological Science*.
- Seraj, S., Blackburn, K. G., & Pennebaker, J. W. (2021). Language left behind on social media exposes the emotional and cognitive costs of a romantic breakup. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 118, e2017154118.

Week 8 (April 12th-16th)

Preliminary Proposal Outline

[PROPOSAL OUTLINES due via SUCourse on April 18 by 14:00]

Week 9 (April 19th-23rd)

Meetings on Proposal Outline

Week 10 (April 26th-30th)

The Self

- Cole, S., Dominick, J. K., & Balcetis, E. (2020). Out of reach and under control: Distancing as a self-control strategy. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*.
- Atir, S., Rosenzweig, E., & Dunning, D. (2015). When knowledge knows no bounds: Self-perceived expertise predicts claims of impossible knowledge. *Psychological Science*, 26, 1295-1303.
- Scopelliti, I., Loewenstein, G., & Vosgerau, J. (2015). You call it “self-exuberance”; I call it “bragging” Miscalibrated predictions of emotional responses to self-promotion. *Psychological Science*, 26, 903-914.

Week 11 (May 3rd-7th)

Culture & Context

- Varnum, M. E., & Kitayama, S. (2011). What’s in a name? Popular names are less common on frontiers. *Psychological Science*, 22, 176–183.
- Lun, J., Roth, D., Oishi, S., & Kesebir, S. (2013). Residential mobility, social support concerns, and friendship strategy. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 4, 332-339.
- Thomson, R., Yuki, M., Talhelm, T., Schug, J., Kito, M., Ayanian, A. H., ... & Ferreira, C. M. (2018). Relational mobility predicts social behaviors in 39 countries and is tied to historical farming and threat. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 115, 7521-7526.

Week 12 (May 10th-14th)

No class – Eid al-Fitr (Ramazan Bayram)

Week 13 (May 17th-21st)

In-class Presentations

Week 14 (May 24th-28th)

In-class Presentations

[PROPOSALS due via SUCourse on June 11 by 14:00]